

Christian Community

Volume 6 No. 10

December, 1954

Launch Denominational Emphasis on Christian Commitment

Conference on Christian Commitment and Christian Community

Sponsored by the Commissions on Evangelism, Stewardship and Christian Social Action of the Evangelical and Reformed Church

Sheraton-Gibson Hotel — Cincinnati, Ohio
February 1-3, 1955

Tuesday, February 1

8:00 a. m. Registration

9:30 a. m. Worship—The Reverend John L. Schmidt, Pastor, Friedens Evangelical and Reformed Church, St. Louis, Missouri.

10:00 a. m. Keynote Address: "The Theological Basis of Our Christian Concern" Dr. Roger L. Shinn, Professor of Theology, Vanderbilt University School of Theology, Nashville, Tennessee

11:15 a. m. Group meetings for discussion of address and formulation of questions.

2:00 p. m. Plenary Session: Discussion of questions reported by groups.

3-5 p. m. Discussion Groups

Group A. Topics 1. The Christian's Commitment and its Scope
2. The Mission of the Church to those Outside her Life

Group B. Topics 3. Christian Living in Home and Church
4. The Stewardship of All of Life

Group C. Topics 5. The Social Expression of our Faith
6. Working toward a Responsible Society

7:30 p. m. Meeting of Commission with Synodical Committee Representatives

Wednesday, February 2

9:30 a. m. Worship—The Reverend John L. Schmidt

10-12 a. m. Discussion Groups

Group A. Topics 3 and 4
Group B. Topics 5 and 6
Group C. Topics 1 and 2

2-5 p. m. Discussion Groups

Group A. Topics 5 and 6
Group B. Topics 1 and 2
Group C. Topics 3 and 4

8:00 p. m. Public Service of Worship, Philippus Evangelical and Reformed Church, 106 W. McMicken Ave.

Address: "Christian Commitment and Christian Community"

The Reverend Charles Templeton, Executive Secretary, Division of Evangelism, Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A., New York, New York

Thursday, February 3

9:30 a. m. Worship—The Reverend John L. Schmidt

10-12 a. m. Plenary Session: Reports of Discussion Groups

2:00 p. m. Plenary Session: Plans for Follow-up

4-4:30 p. m. Closing Worship—The Reverend John L. Schmidt

Three Commissions Sponsor Conference to Perfect Plans

A united, denomination-wide emphasis on Christian Commitment and Christian Community will receive its initial send-off in a national conference to be held at the Sheraton-Gibson Hotel, Cincinnati, Ohio, February 1, 2, and 3, 1955.

Sponsored by the Evangelical and Reformed Church's Commissions on Evangelism, Stewardship, and Christian Social Action, and given a warm endorsement by the General Council of the Church, this conference will bring together delegates from the thirty-four synods representing the cooperating interests. Other denominational boards, the Women's Guild, the Churchmen's Brotherhood, and the churches of the Cincinnati area will also be represented in the meeting.

The keynote address of the conference, intended to articulate the theological basis of the church's concern and to characterize the scope of the Christian's commitment to his Lord, will be delivered by the Reverend Roger L. Shinn, formerly professor of religion and philosophy at Heidelberg College and presently on the faculty of Vanderbilt University School of Theology, Nashville, Tennessee.

The entire membership of the conference will be divided into three working groups for discussion of the six major topics—The Christian's Commitment and its Scope; the Mission of the Church to those Outside her Life; Christian Living in Home and Church; The Stewardship of all of Life; the Social Expression of our Faith; and Working toward a Responsible Society. Resource leaders for the topics include Dr. Berlyn V. Farris, newly elected executive director of the Joint Department of Evangelism of the National Council of Churches; Dr. Clarence Stoughton, president of Wittenberg College, Springfield, Ohio; and the Reverend Walter S. Press, pastor of Bethlehem Evangelical

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In keeping with its policy of giving priority to those synods which are in any given year zoned to the Commission by the General Council, the staff during the present year is literally spanning the continent from the Pacific Northwest to the Deep South and from "rock-ribbed" Massachusetts to sunny California.

A primary responsibility was the presentation of the Commission's over-all program at the fall meetings of the synods. The executive secretary did so at Rocky Mountain and New York synods; the Reverend Chester Marcus at Lancaster and Lehigh. But no less welcome were opportunities to discuss problems and programs of Christian social action with groups, or to preach to local congregations in Lincolnton, North Carolina; Denver, Colorado; Laramie and Riverton, Wyoming; Holyoke, Massachusetts; and Newark, New Jersey.

The award for long-distance travel, however, goes to our Field Secretary, Nelsen Schlegel. Starting with Mission

Commission Staff Spans Continent

Festival services at Payette, Idaho on September 26, he preached in four states while representing the Commission on Christian Social Action in Pacific Northwest, California, Nebraska, and Southern Synods. Lay participation in discussion groups on social action in all of the synod meetings was good. Particular interest was taken in the churches' responsibility to prepare the way for an acceptance of the Supreme Court's school desegregation decision. Although this matter is of particular concern to communities in the South, churchmen everywhere are seeing the need for an increased application of the principle of Christian brotherhood across racial lines.

During November and December, Mr. Schlegel is making a second visit to the West Coast. This time he will meet groups in nearly half of the churches in Pacific Northwest Synod, preach in Oregon and California, and spend a week in Colorado as a member of an interdenominational team conducting a series of one day institutes on "The Churches and the United Nations," arranged by the Colorado State Council of Churches.

Chester Marcus, the newest member

of our staff, is already coming into wide demand. Following his participation at the Tiffin Conference on a Christian and His Daily Work, at a Dunkirk Family Week, and at the National Council of the Youth Fellowship, he has had opportunity to address conferences and meet with groups in Burlington, Iowa; Wilkinsburg, Pennsylvania; Buffalo, New York; Akron, Ohio; and the meeting of synod presidents in Cleveland.

The synodical committees on Christian social action in Lehigh and Lancaster synods are now setting up a schedule for the Field Secretary for January and March. Plans are under way also for institutes on Christian Social Action in Rocky Mountain and New York synods. Southern Synod is proposing to bring in two members of the staff for a series of regional institutes and visits to selected congregations and communities. In addition, a number of synods, including Potomac and Reading, contemplate conferences on a Christian and his daily work.

In short, with its full complement of three, the staff has been busier this fall than ever before.

IMMIGRATION ACT EXAMINED

Now that the McCarran-Walter Act, the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952, has been in operation for nearly two years, how does it work, and how does it look to its critics? Two interesting studies of this subject have recently appeared.

One of these, *As We Do Unto Others*, written by Charles H. Seaver, is a carefully reasoned 30-page booklet which carries the imprint of the National Council of Churches. It reflects the viewpoint of many American church leaders who have held that the McCarran Act greatly needs modification to correct some of the inequities it contains. The National Origins quota system is studied. The McCarran Act would have permitted 155,000 quota immigrants in 1953. Actually over a period of 10 years prior to 1953 an average of only about 45,000 came. This was because nations with high quotas didn't need them and didn't use them. Countries from which many people wanted to come had low quotas. Seaver argues for allotting unused quotas to countries that could and would use them.

Attention is given also to the way the

act is administered. The power wielded by consular officials is criticized. The consular officer "is expected to exercise his personal judgment whether or not the admission of each particular applicant would be in 'the public interest'." This officer's opinion is usually final. Particular attention is given to the difficulties the present visa program poses for alien visitors. Barriers are raised "against temporary visitors — such as scientists, other scholars, technicians, artists, etc., invited here for conferences and consultations, so that normal international intercourse is unduly restricted." Often the investigation preceding the granting of visas takes so long that the occasion for which they are wanted is past before the consular officer is ready to issue them.

The other McCarran Act study takes an entirely different approach, but offers similar criticisms. It is *The Golden Door*, a 240 page Random House book by J. Campbell Bruce, a California newspaperman. This book carries the subtitle "The Irony of our Immigration Policy." It contains numerous case studies that bear upon the same objec-

tions discussed in the Seaver pamphlet. Bruce offers interesting human interest observations on aspects of the 1952 immigration law which alienate the good will of other nations. He quotes the *Manchester Guardian* thus: "This visa business is doing the United States incalculable harm, and is undoing all the lavish propaganda about its noble leadership of the free world . . . Most countries have their immigration absurdities, but there are aspects of the McCarran Act that go beyond mere bureaucratic arbitrariness and are repugnant to civilized intercourse."

Bruce gives the history of many cases, of alien U. S. army and navy veterans who ran afoul of the law, and of distinguished scholars invited to be guest professors at United States universities for whom months-long investigations by badly informed consular officials made impossible the brief visits to this country which they sought to undertake on invitations of universities and various scientific conferences.

The book is a plea for a law that will give "fair and just treatment of the

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Speaking of Books

For Protestant Christians the "big news" of 1954 is the Second Assembly of the World Council of Churches which met at Evanston this past summer. Unless we are merely to be "impressed" and satisfied by the sensation and the spectacle of it, we shall need to work purposefully to communicate to all of our people the content and the meaning of this Assembly. The Message and Section Reports are now available from the World Council of Churches, 156 Fifth Avenue, New York 10, under the title, *Evanston Speaks* (50 cents). In addition, this booklet contains questions for discussion and a list of the most important supplementary materials and interpretations available. More extensive study guides based on these reports are being developed by the National Council of Churches' Division of Christian Life and Work.

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Not precisely new, but very appropriate in the light of our denominational interest in an all-inclusive Christian commitment is a most stimulating book by the late J. H. Oldham, entitled *Life is Commitment* (Harper, \$2.50; paper edition 60c). Originally presented as lectures on "The Meaning of Christianity Today," Dr. Oldham deals incisively with such themes as Decision, God, Christ, the Church, and the World. While fully stressing the inwardness of a Christian decision, he makes it very clear that "when God calls men to be His partners, He desires their cooperation in the whole range of human activity." (p. 102) His chapter on the Church makes some very pertinent points about the laity, about daily work, and about the character of the Christian life. There is a great deal pressed into its 130 pages.

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Marquis Childs' and Douglass Cater's *Ethics in a Business Society* (Harper, \$2.75) deals with the series of studies on economic life recently completed by the National Council of Churches. Early this year it came out also in a 35c paper bound edition in the Mentor series.

Its readers will be glad to know that a useful study guide is now available for those who want to use the book in group meetings. The guide, prepared for the National Council of Churches by the Division of Social Education and Action of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A., is called *The Camel and the*

Needle's Eye, and can be obtained from the CCSA office for 30c. It offers a lot of suggestions for using the Childs-Cater book in five or more study sessions, in church meetings, or even at luncheon clubs. Many leaders will find the "discussion starters" and the prepared "opinionaires" very useful in getting people to think together about this business of ethics in our every day working world.

The resource section of the study guide will be found particularly useful. Here are suggestions for the use of a number of new teaching and discussion techniques. How to use a "buzz session," for example, or "role playing." Here is a good list, too, of films and filmstrips on various aspects of modern economic life, prepared by various interested organizations, churches, colleges, the NAM, labor unions, etc.

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Not the least significant fact about the statement, *Christian Principles and Assumptions for Economic Life*, recently adopted by the General Board of the National Council of Churches, is the fact that it was adopted by that Board! Drawn up by the Department of the Church and Economic Life on the basis of an earlier statement by the former Federal Council of Churches, it had to run the gauntlet of not only those who objected to the wording or substance of the present statement, but also of those persons who were opposed to the National Council's adopting *any* statement regarding economic and social questions. Any attempt at summary would be presumptuous. Suffice to say, the statement outlines certain fundamental religious and ethical assumptions, then discusses certain misconceptions concerning easy Christian answers, and sets forth thirteen standards for the economic order. The statement, which may be secured from either the National Council or from the Commission on Christian Social Action at ten cents per copy, well deserves careful study.

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Of Elmer Davis's *But We Were Born Free* (Bobbs Merrill, \$2.75) it need only be said that from the dedication (to the memory of Ernst Reuter) on through to the end, this distinguished news analyst deals with the problems of our American society — civil liberties, totalitarianism, effective democratic government — with competence, courage, and penetrating humor.

To Pastors and Local Social Action Chairmen

In looking ahead to Church and Economic Life Week, January 16 to 22, you might consider the following possibilities:

1. Persuade the Men's Bible Class or the Churchmen's Brotherhood to spend several sessions studying *The Camel and the Needle's Eye*. Or, invite a group of volunteers to put in five sessions on it. A young adult group should do well at it.

2. A discussion of the Tiffin Conference on the Christian and his Daily Work. See September issue of CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY and *Christians at Work*. (25c).

3. Invite representatives of three or four vocational groups — labor, management, agriculture, professional or business life — to make up a Church Night panel on Christianity and Economic Life.

4. Suggestions for a sermon on Christian Faith and Economic Life may be found in the National Council's statement on *Christian Principles and Assumptions for Economic Life*.

Race Secretary Installed

On Sunday evening, November 14th, at St. Peter's Church, East Liberty, Pittsburgh, the Reverend Chester Lee Marcus was installed as Associate Secretary for Race Relations in an impressive service attended by members of the Board of National Missions and representatives of our churches in Pittsburgh and surrounding communities.

The rite of installation was conducted by Dr. Charles Enders, of Arlington, Virginia, president of the Board of National Missions, and Dr. Elmer J. F. Arndt, Webster Groves, Missouri, chairman of the Commission on Christian Social Action. The Reverend George Nishimoto, pastor of the Kenwood-Ellis Church and Community Center, Chicago, preached the sermon.

Mr. Marcus was presented for installation by the Reverend Howard Goeringer, executive secretary of the Wyoming Valley Council of Churches, and welcomed to his office by Mr. Roberts R. Appel, chairman of the Joint Committee on Race Relations. Others participating were the Reverend Theo. C. Honold, pastor of St. Peter's Church, Dr. Purd E. Deitz, and Dr. Huber Klemme.

A reception arranged by St. Peter's Church followed the service.

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Seminar Quota Is Twenty

With more denominations participating than in any previous year, the Churchmen's Washington Seminar for 1955 is expected to be the largest ever. Provisions have been made to accommodate upward of 300 persons to be named by the sixteen participating denominations. The maximum quota for the Evangelical and Reformed Church is twenty.

The Seminar will be held February 15 to 18 and will again use the attractive and convenient facilities of the Lutheran Church of the Reformation on East Capitol Street. Unusual interest attaches to this year's program in that the relations between a Democratic Congress and a Republican Administration should begin to take shape at the time.

Accommodations at a special group rate have been arranged for Evangelical and Reformed delegates at the Plaza Hotel, First and D Streets, Northeast. Since the quota for each denomination has been fixed, anyone interested in attending should consult the Commission office at once. Registration covering program expenses and four seminar meals is ten dollars.

Chairman of this year's Seminar Committee, composed of representatives of the denominational and interdenominational agencies sponsoring the Seminar, is Dr. Huber F. Klemme, executive secretary of the Commission on Christian Social Action of the Evangelical and Reformed Church.



Reflections on the Elections

Another highly exciting campaign has ended and an "off-year" election has been held. One is tempted to speculate and moralize concerning some of the results. In many instances voters showed rare discrimination. And in others—one wonders how they could have done as they did!

What matters more than the individual victories and disappointments is the net result for the country. It is too soon to predict, of course. Speaking quite unofficially, and without a crystal ball, may we venture an opinion or two.

1. In the constructive phases of our foreign policy, one may hope that the Democratic majority will show a greater enthusiasm for international cooperation than the nationalistic Republicans who during the last session dominated such crucial committees as the Senate Committee on Appropriations. Pre-election warnings to the contrary, the White House may get better cooperation in the Eighty-fourth Congress than it received in the last one.

2. In domestic policy, one may expect the Democratic majority to examine very critically and to slow down the

Administration's tendency to turn over to the states and to private industry responsibility for natural resources and economic processes which vitally affect the health and welfare of the entire nation.

There is, to be sure, considerable difference of opinion as to what amount and degree of federal control may be desirable and efficient. We may well recall, however, that the General Synod of 1953 called upon the people of our Church and nation "to urge the conservation of our natural resources and needed social services for the sake of the welfare of the whole people in both this and future generations." It would appear that many Americans feel that at certain key points—off-shore oil, TVA, Dixon-Yates, for example—insufficient attention has been given to this principle, while states' rights and private enterprise have been trusted too much.

At any rate, a grave responsibility rests now upon the Majority and the Administration alike to work constructively and cooperatively at the major problems of the hour.

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and Reformed Church, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

On Wednesday evening, February 2, the one public mass meeting of the Conference will be held, with an address on the conference theme by the Reverend Charles Templeton, executive secretary of the Division of Evangelism of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A.

An integral part of the program is the formulation of plans for the serious consideration of our Christian Commitment for Daily Life in all the congregations of the denomination by all the members of the church. Plans for study and action in local churches are being developed by a joint committee representing the three sponsoring agencies. These plans will be carefully studied and perfected by the conference, so as to make them as helpful as possible to pastors, consistories, and local planning committees.

In preparation for the local Emphasis during the fall and winter of 1955-56, Christian Commitment and Christian Community will be one of the themes to be studied during 1955 in summer conferences conducted by the Women's

Guild and other denominational groups. Committees in local churches are encouraged to send representatives to secure training in leadership of the Emphasis where such opportunities are offered.

It is the conviction of the agencies sponsoring the conference that the membership of our Church needs to think seriously about what is involved in being a Christian—committed to Christ. It is believed that ministers and members will welcome the opportunity to take an integrated, rather than a fragmentary, approach to the matter.

Immigration Act

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bona-fide immigrant and the visitor to our shores," to whom, says Bruce, "Let us offer . . . hospitality, not hostility. To do that we need an immigration law that is not written in fear, nor rooted in racial discrimination. And those who administer the law need a change of attitude toward the immigrant and the visitor, an attitude that is not cynical, malevolent and beyond all regard for due process."

F.N.S.